

Message Text

SECRET

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47

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 240949Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9121

S E C R E T OSLO 5510

EXDIS

DEPT PASS DEFENSE FOR SECRETARY SCHLESINGER AND
OASD/ISA FOR WILKINSON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR MMOL NO US

SUBJ: NORWEGIAN PURCHASE OF SHORT RANGE AIR DEFENSE MISSILE

REF: (A) OSLO 4306 (B) STATE 224483

1. DEFENSE MINISTER FOSTERVOLL INFORMED ME ON DEC 19
THAT HE HAS RECEIVED THE GREEN LIGHT FROM PRIME MINISTER
BRATTELI TO PROCEED WITH STEPS NECESSARY TO PURCHASE
A SHORT RANGE AIR DEFENSE MISSILE (SHORAD).

THE PRIME MINISTER LAID DOWN TWO CRITERIA FOR THE
NORWEGIAN DECISION: (1) THAT IT NOT CREATE A POLITICAL
PROBLEM FOR THE GOVERNMENT; (2) THAT THE PRICE BE
"COMPETITIVE" -- I.E., WITHIN THE GENERAL FRAMEWORK
OF THE COST OF THE ORIGINAL CROTALE OFFER.

2. ALTHOUGH NORWEGIANS HAVE BEEN MOST INTERESTED IN
AND WERE, IN FACT, COMMITTED TO CROTALE, THEY HAVE
ENCOUNTERED STRONG DOMESTIC POLITICAL OPPOSITION
BECAUSE OF THE ALLEGED SOUTH AFRICAN CONNECTION AS
WELL AS THE QUESTIONABLE ETHICS OF PAST FRENCH SALES
EFFORTS (SEE REF A). FOSTERVOLL POINTS OUT THAT THE
ISSUE HAS BECOME HIGHLY EMOTIONAL WITH MORAL OVERTONES
(EVEN THE NORWEGIAN CLERGY BECAME INVOLVED
RECENTLY) AND THAT HARD FACTS DO NOT NECESSARILY PENETRATE

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SUCH A CHARGED ATMOSPHERE.

3. AS A CONSEQUENCE, FOSTERVOLL INDICATED THAT HE IS LEANING TOWARD ROLAND TO MEET CRITERIA NUMBER ONE AND SOLVE HIS "POLITICAL" PROBLEM PROVIDED THAT PRICE AND PERFORMANCE FACTORS ARE SATISFACTORY. IN THIS CONTEXT, ACCORDING TO FOSTERVOLL, A US DECISION TO ACQUIRE ROLAND WOULD "TAKE HIM OFF THE HOOK." BECAUSE COMPATIBILITY WITH AMERICAN WEAPON SYSTEMS IS IMPORTANT TO NORWAY, HOWEVER, FOSTERVOLL IS ANXIOUS TO SELECT THE SAME SHORAD SYSTEM AS THE US. HE IS, THEREFORE, EXTREMELY INTERESTED IN THE RESULTS OF OUR EVALUATIONS OF THE FOUR SHORAD SYSTEMS PERSENTLY UNDERWAY.

4. COMMENT: THE IMPACT OF A US DECISION IN FAVOR OF CROTALE ON DEFUSING POLITICAL OPPOSITION IN NORWAY, PROVIDED THAT WE WERE ABLE TO OFFER CROTALE TO THE NORWEGIANS ON A DIRECT PROCUREMENT BASIS FROM THE US, IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO PREDICT IN VIEW OF THE EMOTIONAL NATURE OF THE NATURE HERE. STANDARDIZATION WITHIN NATO IS ALSO IMPORTANT FOR NORWAY AND FOSTERVOLL MUST CONSIDER CAREFULLY WHICH SHORAD SYSTEM THE OTHER EUROPEAN NATO ALLIES ARE LIKELY TO PURCHASE.

5. IN LIGHT OF MY FREQUENT MEETINGS WITH THE DEFENSE MINISTER AND HIS CURRENT KEEN INTEREST IN SHORAD'S, I WOULD APPRECIATE BEING KEPT FULLY INFORMED OF ALL DEVELOPMENTS ON THIS SUBJECT.
BYRNE

NOTE BY OC/T: OSLO 5510 NOT PASSED DEFENSE.

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NNN

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